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FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR LIBERIA (FED)

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FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT (FED) PROGRAM FOR LIBERIA

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COVER PHOTO: Mr. Wuo Yeanue with one of his breeding herd and healthy new set of twins.

DISCLAIMER

The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

ACRONYMS

ACE	Africa Cost to Europe	LCCC	Lofa County Community College
AEDE	Agency for Economic Development and Empowerment	LIFE	Livelihood Improvement for Farming Enterprises
APDRA	Appaloosa Distance Ride Association	LMEP	Liberia Monitoring and Evaluation Program
AWEP	African Women Entrepreneurship Program	LREC	Liberia Renaissance Education Complex
BSTVSE	Bureau of Science, Technical, Vocational and Special Education	MDF	Market Development Fund
BWI	Booker Washington Institute	MIS	Market Information Systems
CARI	Center of Agriculture Research Institute	MoCI	Ministry of Commerce and Industry
CVC	Cassava Value Chain	MoE	Ministry of Education
DAI	Development Alternatives, Inc.	MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party	MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States	NCCC	Nimba County Community College
ED	Enterprise Development	NGW	New General Women
EMMP	Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan	PIDS	Performance Indicator Database System
FED	Food and Enterprise Development	PMP	Performance Management Plan
FTF	Farmer to Farmer	PUA	Peri-Urban Agriculture
FtF	Feed the Future	R&RF	Rights & Rice Foundation
GBCC	Grand Bassa County Community College	RFTOP	Requests for task order proposals
GCAP	Green Coast Agricultural Program	RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
GPS	Global Positioning Systems	STTA	Short Term Technical Assistant
IFDC	International Fertilizer Developmental Center	TAMIS	Technical Administrative Management Information System
IP	Implementing Partner	TVET	Technical, Vocational Education and Training
IQC	Indefinite Quantity Contract	UL	University of Liberia
KM	Knowledge Management	UMU	United Methodist University
LAUNCH	Liberia Agriculture, Upgrading Nutrition & Child Health	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
		VTNFE	Vocational Training and Non-Formal Education

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GEOGRAPHIC REACH OF FED



BACKGROUND

The Food and Enterprise Development (FED) Program for Liberia is a USAID-funded initiative that began in September 2011. Through implementing a Liberian strategy which incorporates women and youth, FED will help the government of Liberia and the country achieve food security — in terms of food availability, utilization, and accessibility — by building an indigenous incentive structure that assists a range of agricultural stakeholders to adopt commercial approaches.

This incentive structure will be built upon:

- Improved technology for productivity and profitability;
- Expanded and modernized input supply and extension systems;
- Commercial production, marketing, and processing;
- Enterprise Services; and
- Workforce Development.

FED's activities will work with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and the private sector to link communities to agricultural inputs (including improved seeds), extension services, nutritious food products, processing services, market information, transportation, credit, and appropriate education, training, and enterprise services.

Over the life of the five-year FED program, expanded market linkages will lead to substantial income and job growth and major increases in the production, processing, marketing, and nutritional utilization of rice, cassava, vegetables, and goats in Bong, Lofa, Nimba, Grand Bassa, Montserrado, and Margibi counties. These counties are being targeted in the context of regional development corridors that foster intra- and inter-county commerce, simultaneously improving food availability and access for all Liberians.

FED's methodology is market-led, value chain-driven, continuously dedicated to indigenous capacity building, and specifically focused on benefiting Liberia's women and youth. FED's approach aims to be collaborative, catalytic, and driven by the goals and objectives of our partner clients. It will lead to increases in incomes for rural households, new employment opportunities for Liberians, increased access to food and improved household dietary diversity scores for food-insecure Liberians, and the adoption of improved inputs, farming practices, and technologies which boost agricultural productivity.

FED is implemented by seven partners including: Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI), Winrock International, International Fertilizer Developmental Center (IFDC), Louisiana State University, The Cadmus Group, and the Center for Development and Population Activities.

SUMMARY—FEBRUARY 2013

Increasing Agriculture Productivity and Profitability

Rice value chain:

- The county managers and the rice value chain technical team have been engaged in intense planning activities. Rice production activities are scheduled to launch in March 2013 once the approval has been granted.
- In February 2013, the first of three sessions to plan the agricultural campaign with outgrowers for Rice Seed Production in 2013 was held at Arjay Farm, Kingsville District, Montserrado County. These sessions will establish a list of best practice farming operations to be carried out for upland and lowland rice seed production per area. The subject of marketing was also incorporated to determine and approve conditions for the use of power tillers, threshers and training calendar, to determine and approve production and marketing targets per location.

Through a series of discussions to design a program that would have the most impact, FED has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Arjay Farm to increase seed production by scaling up and increasing the number of outgrowers from 39 to 150.

- The Rice Value Chain team visited Lofa and Grand Bassa Counties to identify and select the farming groups. During the trip, the team visited ten farming groups in five districts of Lofa County and two farming groups in two districts of Grand Bassa County.
- The Environmental Compliance Officer from FED conducted field visits in three of the counties under FED's jurisdiction; Bong, Margibi, and Nimba Counties. Selected communities in Bong and Nimba counties were visited in order to verify site suitability for low land rice growing. It is intended that the project employs integrated farming methods; minimum reliance on chemicals and fertilizer; reduced erosion; designed irrigation systems to avoid flooding, ensuring efficient soil management and also avoiding the use of protected areas.

Cassava value chain:

- The Land Preparation activity at the New Generation Women (NGW) project site in Cooper Town is in full swing. Land clearing is in process and will be followed by de-stumping and ridge construction. It was agreed that cassava would be planted on the first site on ridges due to the sloping landscape of the area. This planting technique ensures that the cassava root is covered with soil leading to optimum yields. Cassava value chain manager visited the two newly-selected sites and advised the farmers to commence clearing of the areas as soon as possible.

Peri-Urban Agriculture value chain:

- The Peri-urban agriculture team continues its weekly demonstration trainings in the counties showcasing improved technologies for the cultivation of bitter ball, pepper, okra, kale and cabbages. Farmers from the Peri- Urban vegetable groups are beginning to understand the relevance of the improved practices from the demonstration and its contribution towards improving their livelihoods. This month 4 trainings were carried out in transplanting and crop maintenance.

Goat value chain

- The first Farmer to Farmer (FtF) FED Goat Value Chain training that was held in January (2013) is showing promising results; one of the Lead Goat Farmers Mr. Wuo Yeanue of Nengbhen Town, Bain Garr District, Nimba County has seen a much improved survival rate of the kids in his herd. He attended the FtF training last month in Nimba on how to help prevent the high death losses (estimated at 48%) of the newborn kids. The training emphasized better practices in assisting the mother before, during and after childbirth.

Private Enterprise

- Rights & Rice Foundation (R&R), an IQC holder, has conducted and completed the first round of Organization Strengthening training for nine groups (267 participants, 189 female & 78 male) in Bong, Lofa, Nimba and Grand Bassa counties and their final report has been submitted. In preparation for upcoming trainings for sixteen groups (447 participants) in Bong, Lofa, Nimba and Grand Bassa Counties for both Organizational Strengthening and Financial Management, FED's Enterprise Development team signed POs for three IQC holders (Agency for Economic Empowerment, (AEDE), Pace Management Consultants and Educare).
- The FED Pilot Youth Business Plan Competition concluded with the shortlist of six groups comprising 18 youths (3 females and 15 males) presenting their business plans to a panel of judges from the Ministry of Commerce and Industries, FED and other stakeholders. Business ideas presented spanned the value chains of goat production, pepper production, and cassava production and processing. Liberia Multi-Agriculture Venture, Suakoko Cassava and Processors Organization and Liberia Food Enterprise were selected as the top three best business plans. All top six competitors will receive mentorship and guidance from FED in starting their businesses. The students in the groups who won the top three slots will receive \$100 each to support payment of school fees.
- The competition began in November 2012 with the selection of eleven groups of three participants each. The participants were students in business or agriculture studies from Cuttington University and University of Liberia.
- The Enterprise Development team is collaborating with USAID's LAUNCH project to develop the trainer's manual and the curriculum for Farming as a Business (FaaB). In November 2012, FED signed a MOU with ACDI/VOCA in order to utilize training materials created by the company in other Liberian agriculture programs (LAUNCH, LIFE and ACE). This February, the FED team worked to tailor the training to the needs and literacy level of FED beneficiaries. The curriculum is expected to be completed in March with a Training of Trainers to be conducted in April.
- On February 4-6, FED met with a prospective buyer from France, Brussels Airlines, COLEACP-PIP, and Bill Tolbert of Sangai Farm to discuss future export opportunities for vegetables. The buyer is interested in purchasing Okra and other vegetables. Brussels Airlines is interested in providing transport to Europe and support in developing the cold chain necessary for the activities at the local airport. COLEACP will provide technical assistance to Liberian producers in order to meet qualifications and import standards of European countries, though for the current interested buyer no certifications are required. The FED team has provided and will continue to provide technical and business planning support to Sangai Farm.

Institutional Strengthening

- The Ministry of Education hosted a national forum to select the curriculum for a National Diploma in Agriculture. This event started on February 27 and lasted three days. It is aligning the Liberia Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) post-secondary curricula with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). This event will be further reported in the Reference a specific chapter/heading as to where it will be expanded on.
- Following the success of FED's first internship program the second phase was launched officially on February 18, 2013 at the University of Liberia's Library for 170 business and agriculture students. This launching program was well attended by senior staff and Deans from the eight participating academic institutions, as well as representatives from FED.

Collaboration

- The Component Three team lead met with the USAID Advancing Youth Program leadership along with the FED Community Mobilizer and Component One and Two select representatives on February 26, 2013. The purpose for this gathering was to identify ways AYP has developed and used literacy education for out-of-school youth (ages 13 to 35) and FED's need to provide adult literacy and numeracy for farmer groups that FED works with. More meetings will ensue that will focus on sharing training material where both programs meet identical needs, albeit AYP with youth and FED with adults. FED is also looking to collaborate on upcoming communication's activities moving forward as content is gathered for radio dissemination, sharing of studio space has been proposed as part of the ongoing collaboration.
- FED met with the USAID-funded IREX program in the reporting period to discuss possible ways to collaborate for radio programming. IREX is working in five of the six FED priority counties, and is looking for partners to help community radios develop content. FED will work with community radio stations to develop agriculture-related content.
- FED representative met with the Nimba Gender and Development Ministry representative and attended the Nimba County Alliance meeting that Advancing Youth Program (AYP) hosted.
- During February, FED and other stakeholders from the Urban and Peri – Urban (UPA) working group – working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture participated in the UPA conference held at the Monrovia city hall (14th and 15th of February, 2013)

COMPONENT ONE: INCREASED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY

Project Planning

Agriculture productivity gantt charts for all Component One, year two activities were finalized during the reporting period.

Task 1.3 Input Supply System Interventions

Arjay farm is a seed production unit based in Montserrado/Kingsville District, about an hour-drive from Monrovia. Its production capacity ranges from 30-35 Mt of seed rice per cropping season, including both upland and lowland rice seeds. Upland seed accounts for about 75% of the total production and lowland seed for about 25%. Until now Arjay has been involved with 39 outgrowers.

FED has signed a MOU with Arjay Farm to increase production by increasing the number of outgrowers from 39 to 150. The 150 outgrowers have already been selected in the following locations: Kingsville; Harrisburg and Todee. Two sessions are planned for the preparation of the March-August 2013 cropping season for both upland and lowland rice seed production (15 and 23 February 2013).



Photo 1: A female outgrower expected planning results to colleagues, at planning session, Arjay farm

Objectives of the planning session

1. To establish and approve a list of farming operations to be carried out for upland and lowland rice seed production per area including: brushing, de-stumping, weed control, pest and disease control, fertilization, harvesting, threshing, and marketing;
2. To determine and approve conditions for the use of power tillers, threshers and training calendar;

3. To determine and approve production and marketing targets per location;
4. To display commonly used agro-inputs for rice production in collaboration with Wienco to create awareness and interest.

Expected results

1. A list of critical farming operations is developed and approved by the outgrowers;
2. Conditions for the use of power tillers are determined and approved by the outgrowers: where the equipment will be located; which farms; at what cost, maintenance;
3. Production and market targets are determined including minimal levels of investments to make profit;
4. A display is organized for farmers to see commonly used agro-inputs.

Meeting schedule

Task 1.5 Increased Productions and Profitability of Quality Rice

During the month, the Rice Value Chain Team visited Lofa and Grand Bassa Counties to verify the farming groups selected. During the trip, the team visited ten farming groups in five districts of Lofa County and two farming groups in two districts of Grand Bassa County.

The county managers along with the rice value chain technical team in Monrovia, over the period have been working on the planning process of the rice value chain. To date all of the work has been completed. Rice production activities are actually expected to kick-off March 2013 as the Rice Value Chain Team await the approval of the activities.

Task 1.6 Increased Productions and Profitability of Quality Cassava

LREC: During the period under review, the Cassava Value Chain (CVC) and Peri Urban Agriculture (PUA) Specialists visited the Liberia Renaissance Education Complex (LREC) to follow-up on progress at the site. During this time team met with the LREC staff including the Agricultural Instructor who took us to the field to visit the ongoing work and discussion on the way forward was briefly discussed. The LREC proposal to FED was discussed alongside gaps identified in the proposed document. It was agreed that the proposal be revised to reflect total cropping area as well as cropping activities to be carried out, and subsequent amended copy be sent for FED's action.

WORD: A field visit was made to the Widows and Orphans Relief Development and Trust (WORD) farm site; the group consists of 16 members, who have expressed interest in cultivating 3.5 acres (approx. 1. 4 hectare) of cassava during this cropping season – 2013/2014. The group is currently growing local vegetables with the peri-urban agriculture team of FED, in Sackie Boma Town, near Kakata, Margibi County. The site seems suitable to demonstrate intercropping vegetables in the cassava based system in a manner which would enhance maximized land use and profitability.

NGW: The Land Preparation activity at the New Generation Women (NGW) project site in Cooper Town is in full swing. Felling on site one is completed and awaits burning to commence land clearing, de-stumping and ridge construction. It was agreed that cassava would be planted on the first site on ridges due to the slopping landscape that characterizes the area this will result in optimum yields. Franklin Henries, Cassava Value Chain Manager visited the two, newly selected and based on his findings, an instruction was given to commence clearing of sites as soon as possible.

For the cassava, under such clayey condition, mounds would be built to accommodate easy year-round harvest. Fear of waterlogging on some parts of the land was expressed and it was jointly agreed that a final decision would be made on all aspects of the site once the land is cleared, at which time visibility would allow better judgment and informed decisions. In this light, GPS measurement carried

out on the cleared portion of site two revealed a total of five acres cleared, indicating a balance of 32 acres left to complete the 75 acres target for 2013/2014 planting season.

Arjay Farm

Visitation to the Arjay Farm in Montserrado County where large scale processing of gari and rice seed production is taking place, allowed the viewing of processing facilities even though they had run out of gari. The fact that no gari was available could signify that it has been selling well. Subsequent visits to this facility would look to engage in improving in the production process, possibly assisting out-growers of Arjay Farm with productivity aspect to increase production and improve the quality and consistency of their products.

Task 1.7 Peri-urban Vegetable Production

The Peri-urban agriculture team continues its weekly demonstration trainings in the six counties with a total of 40 sites that have been laid out and crops (bitter ball, pepper, okra, kale and cabbages) have been established with 18kgs of improved seeds provided by FED.

At New Generation Women the Peri-urban Specialist noted the new site as clayey and recommended that the site would require a lot of soil amendment to cultivate vegetables, it was noted that site one's soil texture, in terms of blend (sandy-clay-loam), is better than site two. The PUA Specialist has also recommended that a demonstration should be carried out in this area in order to show what is being explained. The aim of an on-site demonstration would be to eradicate the farmers doubts as there is still a degree of confusion about second site soil texture being able to support sustainable cropping without substantial amendments

Farmers from the Peri- Urban vegetables groups are beginning to understand the relevance of the improve practices from the demonstration and its contribution towards improving their livelihoods. Last week in Grand Bassa County, Madam Esther Peters, (pictured below in photo 2) the Chair-lady of one of the vegetable groups, 'Self-help Empowerment Project' in Gunniegar Town, said that she has been involved in vegetable production for the last 20 years, with FED's help she has been able to drastically increase her family's annual income. Previously she has merely been able to raise enough funds to pay for her children to attend the local high school but after the last year's successful harvest (as a result of FED's technical support and interventions) she has been able to earn enough from her sales to send her son to University.

Distribution of Metallic Stamp and Demonstration of Treadle Pump

During the period under review, the Manufacturer Trainer was able to distribute five sets of metallic stamp to five different manufacturers of Monrovia, Montserrado county and Voinjama and Foya, Lofa county. The manufacturers that received the stamps were:

- UNITY METAL CONSTRUCTION & SERVICES Inc.; Doe Community, Somalia Drive;
- OLD FOLKS METAL WORKSHOP, Plank Field , Red Light, Paynesville;
- UNITED BROTHERS METAL WORKSHOP, Duport Road, Paynesville;
- SESAY METAL WORK SHOP, Voinjama, Lofa County;
- NDMA GARAGE, Foya, Lofa County.

The purpose of the stamps distribution is to identify those metallic products that will be produced by these manufacturers to avoid conflict of identification.

Successful Treadle pump demonstrations were carried out in Foquelleh Town, Galai Town, Palala Town, Zoweinta, and Zebay Twon, Bong County. The purpose of these demonstrations is to introduce the farmers to the technology and inform them on the importance; especially when it comes to transporting water for irrigation purposes. The farmers were pleased to receive the technology as it was a positive move towards them solving their water transportation problem. Many of them expressed frustrations over the level of problems they had faced to transport water longer distances during the dry season. The Treadle pump is sold for one hundred and fifty United States Dollars (US\$ 150.00) along with its accessories and six month warranty.

Task 1.8 Goat Interventions

During the month under review, FED Goat Value Chain the first Farmer to Farmer (FtF) training that was held last January 2012 is proving some positive results with one of the Lead Goat Farmers Mr. Wuo Yeanue of Nengbhen Town, Bain Garr District, Nimba County got at least additions to his breeding herd, healthy twins. He attended the FtF training last month in Nimba on how to help prevent the high death losses (estimated at 48%) of the newborn kids. The training emphasized confining the pregnant mother in a protected shelter in the last few weeks of gestation where she can be fed better and then being present for the birth during and immediately after if assistance is needed.

This management of the pregnant animals is counter to the traditional "free range" management followed currently where births occur in the bush unprotected. For example, just following the birth, the farmers were taught not only to confine the mothers in a shelter for the impending birth but to apply iodine immediately to the umbilical cord to prevent infection of the new borns and to make sure they get "the first milk" Colostrum immediately after birth (within minutes is crucial).

Mr. Wou applied his training to the letter and confined this mother in the photo in an old pig shelter (FED will build him a



Photo 3: Mr. Wuo Yeanue with his breeding herd and healthy new set of twins

proper elevated goat shelter in the next few weeks) and was present for the birth to offer assistance if needed and to apply iodine to the umbilical cord, and assure the newborns got colostrum immediately, etc. Result: Healthy twins who now have a much better chance of survival in the first few months of life.

COMPONENT TWO: STIMULATE PRIVATE ENTERPRISE

During the month of February, FED's Enterprise Development team accomplished the following activities:

Activity 2.3.A.i Profile Commercial Buyers and Activity, 2.3.A.ii.a – Profile and Select Lead Producers, FBOs, and Enterprises

Stakeholder Survey Project

Subah Belleh Associates (SBA) completed the Stake Holder Profile surveys in the six counties. The total number of interviews conducted exceeded 500. SBA has prepared and submitted the second draft report of their findings from the survey, which was reviewed by the ED team and comments were sent back to SBA for final review and submission.

Activity 2.3.A.ii.e – Targeted Technical Support

Organization Strengthening and Financial Management Training

Rights & Rice Foundation (R&R), an IQC holder, has currently conducted and completed the first round of Organization Strengthening training for nine groups (267 participants, 189 female & 78 male) in Bong, Lofa, Nimba and Grand Bassa counties. Final report has been submitted. The overall impression from the field team and participants pointed to the fact that the training was rewarding to the beneficiaries.

In preparation for upcoming trainings for sixteen groups (447 participants) in Bong, Lofa, Nimba and Grand Bassa Counties for both Organizational Strengthening and Financial Management, the Enterprise team has completed the signing of POs for three IQC holders (Agency for Economic Empowerment, (AEDE), Pace Management Consultants and Educare). The ED Team is working out the approval process for Rights and Rice consulting firms that did the first Organizational Strengthening Training as mentioned above. Up to date, the service providers (AEDE, Pace Management Consultants and Educare) have completed the initial assessments of farmer associations/organizations expected to participate in the upcoming Organizational Strengthening and Financial Management Training. The training is expected to commence March 4, 2013 in the four mentioned counties with farmers associations/groups.

Youth Business Plan Competition

The FED Pilot Youth Business Plan Competition came to a final completion with six groups representing 18 youth (3 females and 15 males) presenting their business plans to a panel of judges from CHF, MoCI and FED. Business ideas presented spanned the value chains of goat production, pepper production, and cassava production and processing. The top three were selected (Liberia Multi-Agriculture Venture with a total of 81.4%, Suakoko Cassava and Processors Organization with a total of 73% and Liberia Food Enterprise with a total of 72.5%). Winners will receive mentorship and guidance from FED in starting their businesses. The competition began in November, 2012 with the selection of eleven groups of three participants each, all students in business or agriculture studies from Cuttington University and University of Liberia.

Farming as a Business Curriculum Development

The Enterprise Development team is collaborating with the LAUNCH project to develop Farming as a Business (FaaB) curriculum and a trainer's manual. In November 2012, FED signed an MOU with ACDI/VOCA in order to utilize training material created by the company in other Liberian agriculture programs (LAUNCH, LIFE and ACE). The two teams met throughout February to tailor the training to

their respective project needs and beneficiary skill levels. The curriculum is expected to be completed in March with a Training of Trainers to be conducted in April. Enterprise Development Assistants and Extension Agents will deliver initial training to farming groups in the counties.

Linkages and Access to Finance Support

On February 4-6, the ED team met with a prospective buyer from France, Brussels Airlines, COLEACP-PIP, and Bill Tolbert of Sangai Farm to discuss future export opportunities for the farm's production of exotic vegetables. The buyer is interested in purchasing Okra in Liberia that is currently being imported from the United States while Brussels Airlines is interested in providing transport to Europe and support in developing the cold chain necessary for the activities at the local airport. COLEACP will provide technical assistance to Liberian producers in order to meet qualifications and import standards of European countries, though for the current interested buyer, no certifications are required. The FED team will continue to support Sangai Farm with technical assistance in production and enterprise development.

On February 7, the ED team accompanied Bill Tolbert of Sangai Farm and Reverend Tarlo of Tarlo Mixed Farm to visit Afriland Bank and present their business opportunities and business plans. Reverend Tarlo is interested in starting a gari processing facility in Saclapea, Nimba County in order to supply the HANDS project. Both beneficiaries have attended the FED business plan training and mentorship. Afriland Bank will evaluate both opportunities upon completion of final business plans.

Field Visits

The Enterprise Development Specialist along with the Enterprise Development Radio Specialist, Market Linkage Officer and Marketing Officer traveled to Nimba, Bong, and Lofa counties in order to introduce new team members to the county teams, evaluate the functions of the county-based Enterprise Development Assistants, gather information from FED farming groups interested in enterprise development, and organize buyer / supplier linkages. A similar trip to Grand Bassa will be conducted in March. Information gathered will be used to structure FaaB and VSLA training.

Value Chain Training

On January 24, 2013, the Enterprise Development team released an RFP for a Value Chain Consultancy whereby local or international firms were invited to bid on an opportunity to train FED staff in core value chain project implementation methodologies. The bids were due on February 8. The ED team is currently evaluating and negotiating with bidders. Training is expected to be conducted for 35 FED staff (County Managers, ED team members, Component Leads, and Value Chain Leads) at the end of March or the beginning of April.

Activity 2.3.B.vi – Increase Enterprise Registration and Local Government Engagement

The upcoming MSME Conference has been re-scheduled for April 24 – 26, 2013. The core objective for the conference is to highlight the reforms and policies implemented which are creating an enabling environment for the MSME sector to thrive and grow sector in Liberia by:

- Increase the flow of capital to MSMEs
- Enhance the capacity of the business owners/managers
- Build the productivity of the MSME
- Increase access to economic opportunities
- Broaden access to resources needed to respond to economic opportunities.

FED will invite 50 farming groups to the conference. MSMEs, including farming groups and SMEs in agriculture, will be invited to apply to participate in a small trade fair that will accompany the three days

of the conference. The ED team is actively engaged in three planning committees for the event, which meet on a weekly basis.

March-April 2013 activities:

1. From March 3 to March 13, Judith Payne and Jill Shemen, Market Information Systems (MIS) specialists from USAID will be visiting the FED project to work with the ED team and ICT Specialist, Jacki Carlsen on MIS strategies.
2. On March 1, the new Access to Finance Officer, James Mulbah, will begin work with the FED team.
3. From March 13-29, Mary Miller (Financial Services STTA) will work with ED team members and the new Access to Finance Officer on all activities related to access to finance (particularly VSLA training and support for MFIs)
4. In March (dates TBD), the FED Marketing team will conduct a second buyer/supplier meeting in Bong County to identify suppliers and processors of cassava and gari to supply the HANDS project.
5. The ED team will begin a new IQC process in March to find business service providers to provide business training. Current IQC contracts expire on March 9, 2013. Bidder conferences will be conducted in Monrovia and the four main counties to find more localized business service providers.
6. In March, the ED Radio Specialist will travel to the counties to conduct a needs and skills assessment of county radio stations and journalists. The information will be used to inform future radio programming activities for FED.
7. During the last two weeks of March, Radu Ciobanu (DAI Contracts Administrator) will visit Liberia to help conduct an initial bidder's conferences in Monrovia and Bong County and conduct training/mentoring for the ED and MDF teams. The MDF and ED teams will then independently conduct the remaining conferences in Nimba, Lofa, and Grand Bassa.
8. A three-day value chain training will be conducted at the end of March or beginning of April for 35 FED staff.
9. FaaB training of trainers will be conducted in April.
10. The MSME Conference will take place April 24 – 26, 2013.

COMPONENT THREE: BUILD LOCAL HUMAN CAPACITY

Task 3.1 Creating Centers of Excellence

Ministry of Education (MoE), Bureau of Science, Technical, Vocational and Special Education (BSTVES) Services

The Ministry of Education hosted a national forum to select the curriculum for a National Diploma in Agriculture. This event started on February 27 and lasted three days. It is aligning the Liberia Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) post-secondary curricula with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). This event will be further reported in the first half of the March 2013 monthly report.

Internship Program

The opening program for FED internship program second phase was held on February 18, 2013 at the University of Liberia's Library for 170 business and agriculture students. This program was well attended by senior staff and Deans from eight academic Institutions, namely; University of Liberia (UL), Stella Maris Polytechnic, Cuttington University, Cuttington Junior College, Booker Washington Institute (BWI), United Methodist University (UMU), Nimba County Community College (NCCC), Grand Bassa County Community College (GCCC).

FED Chief of Party, Mr. Jonathan Greenham attended the launch and gave a motivational address encouraging students to utilize the opportunity to its potential in order to move the Liberian agriculture sector forward. FED Training Specialist who instigated the program, Catherine Harris Karmo, gave a brief synopsis of the pilot phase of the internship to date. She outlined the number of phases and students to be recruited for the 2013 internship period. Currently, over 27 institutions have agreed to work with FED in the implementation of this phase.

Short speeches were given by representatives from the various schools, colleges and universities. Their remarks contained the same message, emphasizing that their students must be vigilant and make good use of the opportunity given to them to reinforce their classroom experiences. They were also told to remain humble despite their academic degrees and learn the best they can to better their communities.

Booker Washington Institute

FED worked with BWI to demonstrate drip irrigation at the school. 108 BWI department of agriculture students and two BWI staff members participated in the site development. The site was selected on a gentle to moderately sloping piece of well-covered grass land near a hand pump well. Both interns and students learned how to apply making squared corners in the demonstration plot using the Pythagorean Theorem. They also learned proper measurement techniques and plot-making by using biostrips (grass strips) between growing plots. This enables the grower to change beds every two to three years and



Photo 4: Intern Amel (left) assists BWI Students Measuring Demonstration Site

thus maintain soil fertility.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

MARKET DEVELOPMENT FUND

During the month of February 2013, the MDF approved three new activities under Component Three. In summary, from the beginning of the program through February 2013, FED has generated and approved **38** activities, totaling in budget estimates. There are another **28** activity concepts covering all three Components, totaling in budget estimates that have been proposed and are in the approval process. Below are two tables: Table A gives status and budget estimates; Table B summarizes completed and ongoing activities follows below (please note that completed activities are shaded grey)

TABLE A:

Status	#	Estimated budget
Approved	38	
proposed	28	
Completed	22	
Closed	1	

TABLE B: FED ACTIVITY TABLE – APPROVED ACTIVITIES

Activity Name	Numb	Description	Start Date	End Date	Approx . Value (USD)	Location (county, district)	Activity Status
COMPONENT 1							
Rice Production and Processing Demonstration	C1-MDF-01	26 sites/partnerships with farmer associations in training by module (site selection, rice variety selection, land preparation, fertilizer application, seedling production, transplanting, irrigation, weeding, harvesting, post-harvest). In addition, labor-saving production technologies (rotary weeders, power tillers) will be demonstrated.	5/21/12	10/31/12		Lofa, Nimba, Grand Bassa, Bong	Ongoing
Water Well Drilling	C1-MDF-02	Assess local conditions for the installation of tube wells, including a technique that increases the recharge rates of existing shallow wells, and train the FED project technical trainer and workers from two local enterprises in the manual installation of tube wells.	5/24/12	08/31/12		Bong, Montserrado, Nimba, Margibi	Ongoing
MoA Participation at Scientific Conference of the Global Cassava Partnership in Kampala, Uganda	C1-TRN-03	Enhance MoA's knowledge of climate change concerns for the cassava sector by funding the attendance of their program officer at the Scientific Conference of the Global Cassava Partnership in Kampala, Uganda.	6/18/12	6/22/12		Montserrado	Completed
Training Private sector on Soil Testing processes and procedures	C1-TRN-04	Enhance soil testing services in the private sector by partnering with a company that is currently providing soil testing for engineering services but who would like to expand soil testing to the Ag sector. FED will	5/28/12	9/30/12		Montserrado	Completed

		provide training on how to test soils while the company will provide the soil tests required by the FED program so extension agents can make fertilizer recommendations.					
Training and Demonstrations on Integrated Soil Fertility Management/ISFM	C1-MDF-06	Train 1000 farmers on 22 FED cassava demonstration sites, upland rice out-growers, members of 3 cooperatives, 20 extension staff and 12 agro-dealers. The total ISFM demonstration coverage is 150 hectares covering all FED sites (60x50) per plot.	09/24/12	11/30/12		Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Nimba	Ongoing
Capacity building for the safe use of authorized agro-chemicals in Bong and Lofa	C1-MDF-08	Collaborate with input dealers in organizing sensitization, awareness creation and demonstrations for the safe use of authorized agro-chemical and equipment. Conduct two demonstrations of innovative tools, inputs (fertilizer, chemicals, etc.) in Lofa and Bong.	7/24/12	8/15/12		Lofa, Bong	Completed
Arjay Farms Out-grower Expansion	C1-MDF-11	Work with Arjay Farms in expanding and training additional out-grower staff. In addition, provide Arjay with the necessary tools and training in order to process the significant increase in rice seed.	6/18/12	10/15/13		Montserrado	Ongoing
Vegetable Seedling Special Study	C1-MDF-13	Identify approximately 30 independent vegetable seedling producers in the focus counties (5 per county). Then conduct mini-survey with 30 producers to collect data on each production sites' setup and location, scope of seedling production and sales, inputs and costs for production, as well as challenges in producing and selling vegetable seedlings. Based on the survey determine the best candidates to be trained as	6/5/12	7/02/12		Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Nimba, Montserrado, Margibi	Completed

		commercial vegetable seedling producers through the FED Vegetable Seedling Program.					
Food Consumption Patterns & Expenditure Among Peri-Urban Farmers (FCPE) Special Study	C1-MDF-14	A mini survey of a sub-sample of the FED Baseline Survey of households that was conducted between February and May 2012. The Baseline sampled approximately 85 households involved with FED in the peri-urban areas of Margibi and Montserrado Counties. The specific objective of this survey is to characterize the following: types of food consumed (dietary variety) and types of food sources by household head type, main livelihood of household head and household size; estimate average household food expenditure and share of different food types in total food ; and consumption shocks and coping strategies.	5/21/12	6/29/12		Montserrado, Margibi	Completed
Soy Flour Compost Distribution	C1-MDF-15	Collaborate with OICI on the transfer of 485 MT of spoiled soy flour that was imported by OICI but is unfit for neither human nor animal consumption. FED will work with local partners on using the soy flour for compost on FED and partner sites. A warehouse will be constructed to store the soyflour.	7/9/12	12/31/12		Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Margibi, Montserrado, Nimba	Ongoing
Completion of National Peste des Petits Ruminant (PPR) Vaccination Campaign	C1-MDF-18	Assist MOA with effective completion of the National PPR vaccination campaigns at the County level. Significant EU/AU/IBAR provided vaccines remain unused due to closure of program.	7/2/12	10/15/12		Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Margibi, Montserrado, Nimba	Ongoing
Biomass-fired Testing and Possible	C1-MDF-19	The aim of this activity is to test, demonstrate and, depending on the results of the testing and	11/16/12	12/18/12		Montserrado	Ongoing

dissemination		demonstrations, promote the commercialization of biomass-fired vegetable dryer.					
Vetiver Expansion Program	C1-MDF-20	Develop plant materials that are effective at stopping soil erosion. Establish small nurseries of Vetiver at the county offices to be eventually planted out at demo sites to assist with soil erosion.	6/29/12	10/31/12		Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Montserrado, Nimba	Ongoing
Cassava Demo Site Training and Cultivation – Phase I	C1-MDF-21	22 sites/partnerships with farmer associations to increase farmers capacity to increase the production of cassava, expand network of out grower farmers in cassava, and build sustainable and profitable cassava farming operations for cassava farmers in the target counties.	6/18/12	10/31/12		Lofa, Nimba, Grand Bassa, Bong	Ongoing
Phase I, Youth Nutrition Program	C1-MDF-22	Build Demonstration site to build and increase overall nutrition at orphanage. Train Orphanage leaders and kids in vegetable farming and input supplies and provide technical assistance on goat health.	6/29/12	12/31/12		Montserrado	Ongoing
Vegetable seedling production and sales	C1-MDF-24	Motivate farmers to invest in vegetable production by training seedling producers in use and promotion of improved inputs and on how to provide technical information services to farmers.	8/15/12	01/31/13		Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Margibi, Montserrado, Nimba	Ongoing
Johnsonville Women Agriculture Project	C1-MDF-25	Improve the water management system through the construction of peripheral canals to collect and control water from the catchment areas and the construction of peripheral bunds.	7/23/12	10/22/12		Montserrado	Ongoing
Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition Survey	C1-MDF-26	Partner with the Government of Liberia on the 2012 CFSNS goals to provide baseline food security and	7/16/12	12/14/12		Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Margibi,	Ongoing

(CFSNS)		nutrition information that will underpin the measurement of progress in the implementation of PRS II and UNDAF 2013-17. The main objective is to ensure availability of timely and appropriate high quality food security and nutrition data to inform policy and programming.				Montserrado, Nimba	
One day technical consultative workshop on livestock interventions in Liberia	C1-MDF-29	Assist the MOA in achieving a sound understanding of development interventions in the livestock sector by arranging a meeting to identify donor funded interventions currently under implementation in the livestock sector and facilitating relationship building among participating organizations.	9/6/12	9/6/12		Montserrado	Completed
Soy Flour Compost Production Training	C1-TRN-30	Collaborate with Sangay farm based on their knowledge and experience in compost production to train lead cassava farmers from Bong, Nimba, Grand Bassa and Lofa counties in compost production and its application.	8/16/12	8/30/12		Bong, Nimba, Grand Bassa, Lofa	Completed
T-shirt for Cassava, up and lowlands rice, and vegetables demonstration trainees	C1-MDF-31	Increase awareness of FED programs in targeted communities by production of a FED t-shirt to be distributed to those who are participating in FED activities.	8/21/12	9/30/12		Bong, Nimba, Grand Bassa, Lofa	Ongoing
Training in treadle pump manufacturing and tube well installation	C1-MDF-32	Train metal workers and other artisans in the production and installation of treadle irrigation pumps and tube wells, which are relatively low cost and highly productive irrigation equipment.	8/16/12	2/28/13		Lofa, Margibi, Nimba	Ongoing
Vegetable and Cassava Processing	C1-MDF-34	Train local manufacturers in producing low-cost, efficient cassava and vegetable processing equipment. Provide portable cassava mill and	9/24/12	12/15/12		Montserrado, Bong	Ongoing

		other processing equipment allowing for easy transportation from one location to another.					
Agro-dealers capacity building	CLIN01-MDF-0036	During FY 2012, a total of 12 agro-dealers and input suppliers were identified. Their capacity and products currently available for distribution in Liberia were assessed. These 12 change agents form the initial target group for our interventions, opportunities for expansion of the distribution network and identification of new input supply enterprises will continue to be explored.	10/29/2012	9/30/2013		Bong, Nimba, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Margibi, Montserrado	Ongoing
Impact Rice Dehuling	C1-MDF-40	Introduce low-cost, locally made rice dehulling equipment available to rice producers and consumers, making profitable processing businesses a possibility and improving access to markets.	11/07/12	12/18/12		Montserrado, Bong, Nimba	Ongoing
Three day technical consultative workshop on livestock interventions disease extension support in Liberia	CLIN01-MDF-0045	In order to effectively manage the development of the National Livestock Sector, the MOA needs to instruct all Livestock sector extension staff in issues of animal health and prevention in Liberia. The FED has received invitation for its project County Livestock Extension staff to attend a planned workshop in animal disease diagnosis and prevention scheduled for Dec 17-19, 2012.	12/17/2012	12/19/2012		Montserrado	Completed
COMPONENT 2							
Business Management Skills Training	C2-TRN-01	Stimulate agribusiness growth by conducting a business management training that will help attendees to identify their business skill strengths and weakness; develop a stronger business plan; learn about the	5/23/12	6/8/12		Grand Bassa, Montserrado, Nimba	Completed

		various component of managing a successful agri-business; and present an action plan to develop and manage a profitable agriculture business.					
Formation of National Cassava Sector Coordinating Committee	C2-MDF-02	Facilitate the establishment of a sustainable system for coordination, advocacy and information dissemination within the Cassava sector as agreed in the National Cassava Sector Strategy document.	6/1/12	9/30/12		Lofa, Nimba, Grand Bassa, Bong	Ongoing
Enterprise Development Pilot Program	C2-TRN-03	Prepare various producer groups in Nimba to meet the minimum standard requirements as Business Associations (Business registration and establishing bank accounts as well as putting in place good financial system) through a training workshop.	7/2/12	10/31/12		Nimba	Completed
Computer literacy training for From God to Man Farmers Association	C2-TRN-04	Provide basic computer training to ten community members in the village of Doumpa. The computer training will enhance the capacity of the farmers association to efficiently manage the association	7/12/12	9/12/12		Nimba	Completed
Stakeholder Profiles	C2-MDF-05	Provide baseline and profile data on lead producers, agro-input dealers, processors, transport and logistics companies, and buyers (including markets) that support the four value chains: rice, cassava, vegetables, and goats in Bong, Lofa, Nimba, Grand Bassa, Montserrado, and Margibi.	8/6/12	12/31/12		Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Margibi, Montserrado, Nimba	Ongoing
Business Skills Training for SMEs	C2-TRN-06	To stimulate the Agriculture sector FED will work with approximately 25 participants representing 12 SMEs on the following: key considerations when writing a business plan; applying a simple process to write a	7/18/12	9/7/12		Bong	Completed

		business plan effectively; coordination of various company departments and resources in the process of writing the business plan; and drafting of business plan document.					
Mentorship program for Business Plan Development for SMEs	C2-TRN-07	Market Research training, Telephone follow-ups with various groups, Market Analysis & Development of Marketing Plan training, Development of Production/Operational Plan training, Development of Financial Plan training, and finalization of each partner's business plan.	7/25/12	10/31/12		Bong, Montserrado	Completed
Welekamah Farmer Based Organization	C2-TRN-08	Build the capacity of Welekamah to operate more effectively as a business through a training workshop which will address the topics of customer service, selling techniques and farming as a business.	1/4/12	1/6/12		Bong	Completed
New Generational Women/AEDE/ Chevron	C2-MDF-09	Build the capacity of a predominantly women cooperative group to produce pepper and cassava farms with value addition components to increase incomes and food security for farming families of Upper Clay Ashland in rural Montserrado County. Activities include completion of a Baseline Survey, provision of good governance training, provision of literacy training, provision of agricultural skills training, provision of financial management training, provision of business management and marketing training.	10/1/12	9/30/13		Montserrado	Ongoing
Enterprise Development Pilot Plan And Gender	C2-TRN-10	Prepare various producer groups in Grand Bassa to meet the minimum standard requirements as Business	8/7/12	8/11/12		Grand Bassa	Completed

Concept		Associations (Business registration and establishing bank accounts as well as putting in place good financial system) through a training workshop that also addresses problems and constraints that female members face and stresses the importance and benefits of addressing those problems.					
MSME-FED Partnership Formalization Outreach Program	C2-MDF-13	In support of MOCI, conduct an outreach campaign that will better inform and encourage the public (Farmers Association, Agriculture input dealers and value chain actors) to register their businesses and also inform them about the benefits associated with the registration process.	9/7/12	12/31/12		Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Margibi, Montserrado, Nimba	Ongoing
Pilot Youth Business Plan Competition for Institutions	C2-TRN-15	FED will pilot a Business Plan Competition which includes a training component for Seniors and recent graduates of business and agriculture programs at the following institutions: BWI, Cuttington University, University of Liberia, Nimba Community College, and Grand Bassa Community College. Three top winners will be eligible for assistance from FED with implementing their business plan.	10/29/12	12/28/12		Bong, Montserrado, Grand Bassa, Nimba, Bong	Ongoing
Organizational Strengthening	C2-TRN-18	After conducting a robust needs survey and assessment of FBOs, FED will provided targeted FBOs with organizational strengthening training to improve organizational and management practices, communication skills, financial management skills, human resource development skills and gender	10/30/12	2/28/13		Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Nimba	Ongoing

		inclusiveness.					
Video Workshop	C-2-MDF-19	<p>FED, in partnership with USAID FACET, will provide training on taking and presenting low-cost video. This training will target selected agribusinesses and organizations doing agriculture extension work, as well as MoA and FED staff. Video content will target areas where there are gaps in knowledge in the goat, cassava, rice, and vegetable value chains.</p> <p>By providing this training we will provide additional technical tools and knowledge to strengthen Liberian agribusiness and community groups' ability to address their target audience.</p>	12/03/12	12/08/12		Montserrado	Approved
MSME Conference 2013	CLIN02-MDF-0020	<p>The Government of Liberia with the support of LBBF and IFC will bring together 150-200 MSMEs, banks, MFIs, and civil society for 3 days conference which will be based on the four pillars of the MSME policy: Legal and Regulatory Reforms; Access to Markets; Access to Finance; and Building Skills and Knowledge. The conference will allow the government to take stock of the MSME sector in Liberia, deliver key training workshops to assist them in all stages of development, and examine practical steps that other key players including banks, micro finance institutions, and concessionaires can take to promote sustainable growth leading to employment creation and jobs.</p>	11/06/2012	02/08/2013		Montserrado	Ongoing

Second Organization Strengthening Training	CLIN02-TRN-0021	The key program objective for organizational strengthening is to consolidate the organization and strengthen its leadership and governance structure. It also aims at ensuring the direct participation of its members, including networks and associates of Agriculture commercial partners in the sector development and implementation.	12/15/2012	03/15/2013		Bong, Nimba, Grand Bassa, Montserrado, Lofa	Ongoing
Financial Management	CLIN02-TRN-0023	Organizations and individuals assisted by donor projects often abandon the activity when donor funding ends, rather than continuing development of productive enterprises; frequently organizations are initiated for the primary purpose of capturing donor funding. For example, donor projects have stimulated swampland rice cultivation using a model of payment for product with seeds rather than cash. Despite profitability (reported by donors) growers stopped cultivation when the project ended. Observers attribute this to lack of growers' ownership of the activity, lack of personal investment and lack of financial literacy.	12/10/2012	03/10/2013		Grand Bassa, Nimba, Lofa	Ongoing
Financial Management Training	CLIN02-TRN-0023	The objectives of Financial Management training and mentorship are to: 1) Learn terms and functions of a basic financial management system 2) Learn organizational roles and responsibilities for maintaining a financial system 3) Learn to execute basic monthly financial record keeping	12/10/2012	03/10/2013		Nimba, Bassa, Lofa, Bong	Ongoing

		4) Learn to compile a forecast basic budget, profit and loss statement, cash flow (level permitting)					
Value Chain Consultancy	CLIN02-MDF-0024	The objective of this is to provide guidance, mentorship, and momentum to the Market Linkages Officer and other Enterprise Development Team members on the implementation of the following activities:	1/14/2013	2/28/2013		Montserrado	pending
COMPONENT 3							
Agro-Business Internship Program	C3-MDF-01	Partner with universities and vocation schools in establishing a 3 month internship program for selected students and place them in Agro-business organizations.	6/1/12	11/30/12		Montserrado, Nimba	Ongoing
Staff Training and Curriculum Roundtable discussion at BWI and Nimba	C3-TRN-02	Conduct two-day training for BWI Department of Ag and Admin staff as well as all staff at the Nimba Community College on instructional development and delivery. A curriculum review with all stakeholders will also be conducted.	6/11/12	6/22/12		Montserrado, Nimba	Completed
Booker T. Washington Institute (BWI): Building a Center of Excellence	C3-MDF-04	BWI lacks the resources and training to be a Center of Excellence for Liberia. Curriculum has not been reviewed nor improved for several decades. Staff need to be re-trained, and infrastructure for the Library and Department of Agriculture is poor, with inadequate facilities and equipment for teachers and students. FED will work with BWI on the following:	6/15/12	9/30/12		Margibi	Ongoing

		<p>1) Upgrade BWI to become a Center of Excellence</p> <p>2) Upgrade curricula and equipment for BWI's agriculture department.</p> <p>3) Create an environment conducive to learning and to the pursuit of excellence in agriculture.</p>					
Food Processing and Preservation Project	CLIN03-MDF-0005	<p>As a result of the 15 year civil war, most basic agriculture products currently sold domestically are imported from nearby neighboring Countries. Additionally, the lack of skills and techniques for food processing and preservation are minimum and therefore the farmer must sell all fresh produce immediately and any surplus represents an economic loss. This loss of income dissuades Liberian youth from becoming actively engaged in agriculture as an economic livelihood.</p>	9/20/2012	4/30/2013		Montserrado, Bong, and Nimba	Ongoing
FED World Food Day Participation - Child Art Competition	C3-MDF-06	<p>Meaningfully involve youth in agriculture and business development in order to prepare them to participate more fully in economic development and food security. This will be done through partnership with Child Art to arrange an art competition among school children on the theme of World Food Day, culminating in a final awarding ceremony at the World Food Day event being organized by the MoA.</p>	9/10/12	12/15/12		Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Margibi, Montserrado, Nimba	Ongoing

Instructor Survey and Vocational Education Instruction	CLIN03-TRN-0010	FED is active in four community colleges and the BWI. In order to know the needs of instructors, an assessment will take place. Based on the assessment vocational instructor education will take place.	12/03/2012	12/16/2012		Margibi, Grand Bassa, Nimba	Ongoing
STTA activities at BWI and two community colleges	CLIN03-TRN-0013	An assessment of the Land Laboratory and Service-Learning offices at BWI and the county colleges is required prior to implementing activities and training. The STTA, Dr. Motsenbocker, will work with the Vocational Training and Non-Formal Education Specialist (VTNFES), Dr. Dennis Eaton, with the assistance of a University agriculture student volunteer to develop relevant demonstrations and conduct hands-on nonformal training for disseminating the interventions. This is in coordination with the Ministries of Education and Agriculture to contribute to the development of vocational agriculture programs focused on youth.	1/21/2013	4/19/2013		Margibi, Grand Bassa, Nimba	Ongoing
Agri-business Internship 2013	CLIN03-MDF-0014	Lack of practical job experience and leadership skills amongst young school leaving professionals. Lack of understanding of agriculture as a business amongst agriculture and business students. (Refer to concept notes attached below for more information.)	2/20/2013	12/23/2013		Margibi, Grand Bassa, Nimba, Bong and Montserrado	Ongoing

Identification of Agricultural TVET Faculty Training Opportunities in Ghana	CLIN03-MDF-0015	FED is committed to develop and support college instructors and administrator capacity building through ongoing trainings, as well as short term opportunities at other vocational education institutions in Africa and elsewhere. The focus for strengthening college programs will be on rice, cassava, vegetables and goats value chains. The initial focus is on developing BWI as a Center of Educational Excellence and a model for the other FED-community colleges.	1/31/2013	2/8/2013			Ongoing
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KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Most of the activities initiated by Knowledge Management (KM) were in relation to communication, acquiring information from staff, and improving data storage and accessibility.

1. Communication and Reporting
 - a. KM is currently working with the Cassava and Rice lead to create extension messages for farmers. This will be done in the form of an illustration book and a “How To” video. Communication team will help ensure the USAID requirements for producing and distributing such materials are in place.
 - b. KM is facilitating the process of ensuring IQCs for Local STTA is in place. This means that a roster of local STTAs will be available for activity leads and international STTAs who might need external expertise/ help to carry out special studies.
2. Improving Data Storage and Accessibility - TAMIS
 - a. One of the difficulties FED is currently facing is creating an information sharing platform that various components can utilize for sharing information internally and externally. Thus, KM created a folder on the public drive that is accessible by all staff, and will be used as a focal point for information sharing. Staff received an email with detail instructions on how to store files in the KM folder on the public drive.
 - b. In addition, external information will be stored in the KM public folder in the future to aid with the knowledge building of staff.
 - c. KM is working with the communication team to ensure their personal folders located on the public drive are cleaned up and documents are properly store for easy reference and tracking.
 - d. To enhance external entities knowledge about FED’s activities in Liberia, a contact list has been consolidated and will be placed in the contacts section in TAMIS, which will be used for disbursing information externally.
3. General Update
 - a. A list-serve has been completed in Excel and exported to TAMIS.
 - b. A new process for receiving and orientation has been initiated successfully.
 - c. A FED lecture series activity will be initiated and an investigation was conducted to determine the possibilities; the series concept is being work on.
 - d. A BWI Library update activity will be initiated.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

Training and Capacity Building

The training of Staff in Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (EMMP) was held on 16 February 2013. The training highlighted issues on EMMP and the use of reference documents under the FED project. The objective was that staff can use reference materials in planning activities; achieve full participation of staff in documenting environmental performance and also increase effectiveness in environmental reporting.

Compliance Monitoring of Other Activities

During this period, field visits were conducted in three of the counties of FEDs intervention, Bong, Margibi, and Nimba Counties. Selected communities in Bong and Nimba counties were visited and with the purpose being for site verification on compliance towards effort for site

selection of low land rice. In all intent, mitigation concerns are that the project employ integrated farming methods; minimum reliance on chemicals and fertilizer; reduce possibilities of erosion; design irrigation system to avoid flooding and ensure an efficient soil management and also avoid the use of protected areas.

In the same field visit to Margibi undertaken to assess the possibilities of working with institutions for the transfer of environmental education to youth through the component 3 aspect of the FED project, a formal request from the BWI is expected and will set the bench mark for subsequent arrangements.

Other issue of importance was the meeting with the Advancing Youth Project- another USAID funded project in an attempt to forge collaborative effort on aiding youth through environmental education while developing enterprises. A curriculum review has been set which would provide room for input subscribing to sustainable agriculture which is one of the objectives of the environmental compliance team.

Regular assessment and evaluation of activity continues with the rice value chain projects as planned for 2013 finally reviewed and meeting compliance requirement base on propose mitigations.

Issues Arising:

- Training of field extension staffs and field offices in general on the EMMP piloting concluded and scheduled for a re-run.
- Training of community based agricultural producers on environmental management remains a top priority with specific needs assessment ongoing.
- Introduction of environmental trainings at FEDs associated institutions is still being explored.
- Inclusion of M&E coordinators into compliance monitoring remains a plan with draft of check list now distributed for review to concerns.

Planned Activities:

- Training of field extension staffs and field offices in general on the EMMP in April 2013
- Training and Inclusion of M&E coordinators into compliance monitoring in April 2013.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

During the month of February 2013, the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) team undertook the following activities:

1. The Project Management Plan (PMP) was submitted to USAID during the month. M&E provided USAID with calculations for the Gross Margin on rice production from a sample of farmers among the demonstration villages. An estimate of the value of sales from a sample of farmers in these demonstration villages was also made and presented to USAID during the month.
2. A site visit monitoring form was revised and sent out to the counties. This new form contains space to report on environmental issues, branding and potential success stories.
3. A group participant list template was prepared to capture data for the new demonstration sites for Year 2. Information is currently being collected throughout the project area as the new sites are being organized.
4. M&E and Component 2 staff initiated follow-up surveys of several Component 2 training activities to ascertain how the participants in the trainings have been able to utilize the knowledge gained from these activities. These trainings included Organizational Development for community and farmer based organizations, training in vocational education at local community colleges, and Ministry of Commerce and Industrialization registration workshops.
5. Surveys of the vegetable demonstration groups and their household production and seedling producers and the farmers who actually bought seedlings were initiated during the reporting period.
6. Candidates for M&E positions were interviewed at the county level, final selections made and the process for hiring these staff is expected to be completed by the first of March. Nine individuals will be hired, all but one of whom will be located in the counties.
7. The harvest of rice from some demonstration sites is still going on in a few locations. M&E county staff continues to follow-up on yield data from these sites.
8. The goat program has been initiated and M&E staff accompanied the activity manager to several sites to collect data and information on participants and non-participants in the program to begin forming a baseline from which comparisons can be made on the progress of the program. Several participants in the program have begun constructing fencing for their goats.
9. M&E has worked with the FED environmental officer to assist him in gathering information and data in the field during site visits to project activities. A check-list will be attached to each site reporting form to be completed by the staff person making the visit.
10. An M&E IQC contract was put in place during the month. Three Task Orders are in process and will be initiated in the next month.
11. Mobile data-phone training was completed at all the county offices. These devices will be utilized for the collection of data at the field level. An initial effort will be undertaken during the field work on the vegetable surveys this month, with extended efforts to be made next month.

Travel

1. M&E staff accompanied USAID personnel on a field trip to Lofa. They seemed impressed with the group leaders met and the progress of the activities. A problem with the operation of one treadle pump prompted some discussion about pre-testing and minor engineering for siting the pumps.

2. A great deal of effort and time was spent during the month by M&E County staff traveling to new sites to gather the GPS coordinates. There are over 300 sites that required new GPS readings among the 6 counties. These site readings are being put on County maps by the M&E GIS staff person, along with Year one sites, to provide an indication of site clustering for implementation and travel planning. Collection of these readings will be completed by the end of the month.
3. The M&E GIS staff person travelled to each county to provide training on the use of the new mobile data-phones. These devices will be used in the collection of data at field sites.
4. M&E staff visited four counties to interview candidates for the eight new positions at the county offices.

Monitoring visit reports by County

1. Findings:
 - a. Most of the new sites selected for year two demonstrations have gone far with land clearing and site preparation ahead of MOU signings and tools distribution by FED. These kinds of initiatives by farmer groups need to be followed-up with timely implementation to preserve this enthusiasm.
 - b. Treadle pump use demonstrations were initiated in some counties, but in Nimba there were problems in locating sufficient farmers for some of the demonstrations. In Lofa, a visit to one treadle pump site resulted in the pump not being able to do the job intended – pump water up a slight incline to the vegetable field.
 - c. County M&E staff reports that many of the newly selected groups for the Year two demonstration programs have already begun the preparations of their fields, land clearing/brushing activities, in anticipation of the program start-up. This seems to be an indicator of enthusiasm for the proposed programs at these sites.
 - d. The Nimba County M&E Coordinators participated in the turnover of the Soy Flour/Compost Building to the Administration of the Nimba County Community College (NCCC). The President of NCCC, Dr. Gono, the administration, students and other community members at the program were very happy about the support FED is making in the community.
2. Issues:
 - a. The treadle pump in Lofa that was not working properly needs to be followed-up as to the exact problem and solutions that might apply. Pumps in other areas need to be checked to determine if there are similar problems. FED staff was in the process of checking on the problem with the manufacturer of the pump. There was no resolution to this problem by the end of the month.

Successes and Issues encountered during the month

1. Successes:
 - a. The selection of candidates for new staff positions and eventual hiring will improve M&E's position for tracking the progress of activities in Year two.
 - b. The introduction of the mobile data-phones is expected to enhance M&E's efficiency in collecting and transmitting data from the field to the office.
 - c. The PMP was finalized and submitted.
 - d. The M&E Procedures and Operations manual was completed and will be distributed in the first week of next month.
2. Issues:
 - a. The process of getting Task Orders in place for various scheduled surveys needs to be expedited

- b. The rice crop survey of the Year one demonstrations is still in process, in part due to the incomplete data that was collected in the field. This report will be finalized in the first week of next month.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

Administration and Logistics

Achievements

During the month of February, FED continued to provide effective administration and logistical support to program and administrative staff, while assuring contract compliance.

Staff Recruited, LTTA:

- During the period under review the below listed persons were recruited to occupy vacant positions.

Long Term Contractors:

- Boone Harris- Community Program Officer
- Morleeta Mends-Cole- Community Program Officer
- Charles Flomo- Agriculture Technician Officer
- Mardoe Moore Internship Institutional Outreach Officer
- Tennessee K. Moore- Internship Institutional Outreach Officer

Short Term Contractors:

- Amel D. Eastman- Intern/Drip Irrigation
- Kolobalee Juku- Garden Maintenance
- Randolph P. Kolleh- Intern/Drip Irrigation

Ongoing Recruitment:

- Recruitment is currently ongoing for the following positions
 - M&E Coordinator/Officer
 - Nutritionist
 - Receptionist

Other activities:

- Working with FED's Team on the Performance Management Plan

FED STTA TRACKING TABLE – FEBRAURY 2013

The below STTAs that completed their assignment and are still contributing to the accomplishment activities for the month of February:

Name	Position	Partner	Dates	Summary
Technical STTA				
Alison Gardner	Nutrition Specialist	DAI	February 14 through March 16, 2013	Conduct FED's NAGA and debrief FED team and USAID Mission
Kathleen Kurz	Sr. Nutrition Specialist	DAI	February 6 through March 3, 2013	Conduct FED's NAGA and debrief FED team and USAID Mission
Jacki Carlsen	ICT Advisor	DAI	February 23 through April 13, 2013	ICT support to FED
Rachel Wade	Communications Specialist	DAI	February 15 through July 2013	Communications support to FED Comms team
Margaret Orwig	Knowledge Management/Radio Outreach Advisor	DAI	February 15, 2013 through March 15, 2013	Branding/marketing, report writing, Knowledge management, and radio programming support to Comms team
Steven Lawry	Land Tenure Advisor	DAI	February 25 through March 16, 2013	Land tenure study on women's role in land tenure
Agatha Johnson	SME Training Specialist	DAI	November-March 2013	SME training to C2 identified firms and oversight of the youth business plan competition
Tony Babb	Sr. Rice Value Chain Advisor	DAI	January 17 through March 2013	Support to the rice value chain, with a specific focus on rice cooperative development.
Carl Motsenbocker	LSU Program Manager	LSU	January 27 through February 8, 2013	Support to C3 team and also the PUA program

APPENDIX I: SUCCESS STORY